

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief Ronal W. Serpas**



## Office of the State Fire Marshal State Fire Marshal Mary Corso

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### Fire Safety Tips for Nightclub Patrons

State Fire Marshal Mary Corso encourages nightclub patrons to rely on their own common sense and alertness for protection against tragedies like the ones that left at least 85 people dead in a nightclub fire Thursday night in Rhode Island, and 21 dead after a stampede four days earlier at a club in Chicago. Fire Marshal Corso states, "It is important that people are cognizant of their surroundings and aware of what is transpiring around them. Pay attention to the protection systems that are in place such as fire sprinklers, emergency lighting, and illuminated exit signs. Always know where the closest exit is, and have a plan for evacuation in the event that an emergency should arise."

#### Background on the Fireworks Law in Washington State (RCW 70.77):

- Special effects at live shows must be under the supervision of a licensed pyrotechnic operator with a valid permit from the city or county where the show is taking place.
- Violation of the law is a misdemeanor and may be subject to the following:
  - Seizure of the fireworks
  - Revocation of the license
  - Civil penalty up to \$1,000 per violation
  - Criminal charges
- All fires resulting from fireworks are required to be investigated and reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal.
- In 2001, there were 501 fires and 116 injuries in Washington that were attributed to the use of fireworks.

#### Building and Fire and Life Safety Requirements:

- Washington State has adopted the 1997 edition of the Uniform Codes.
  - Drinking establishments over 5,000 sq. ft. are required to be fire sprinklered.
  - Exit signs are required to be illuminated and provided with backup power.
  - Exits must be readily identifiable.
  - Exit doors are required to swing in the direction of the exit path.
- Since 1999, there have been 19 fires in bars or nightclubs that have been reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal; none were reported as pyrotechnic-related.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal is a Bureau of the Washington State Patrol, providing fire and life safety services to the citizens of Washington State, including inspections of state-licensed facilities, plan review of school construction projects, licensing of fire sprinkler contractors and pyrotechnic operators, training Washington State's firefighters, and collecting emergency response data. For additional information, you may visit our web page at [www.wa.gov/wsp](http://www.wa.gov/wsp) and then click on "State Fire Marshal."

For more information on fire safety, contact your local fire department or the Office of the State Fire Marshal at (360) 753-0400.